

Fraser and Co., of Dunedin, for the sum of £6,788. The total length of the structure is 970 ft., including one 30 ft. draw span, and the date fixed for the completion of the work is the 17th April next. The total expenditure on the railway last year, exclusive of the value of permanent-way materials supplied, was £9,327, but allowing for the permanent-way materials it amounted to £16,825. For the current year a vote of £20,000 is proposed.

HELENSVILLE NORTHWARDS.

Work on the Komokoriki Section has been continued. The excavation of the tunnel has been completed and also the lining of same, and the formation-works are practically finished up to Ahuroa, 2 miles 53 chains beyond the tunnel. Platelaying has been resumed, and on completion the ballasting will be taken in hand.

A survey party has been engaged in locating the extension of the line beyond Ahuroa, and about ten miles have now been fixed, and trial lines run for two or three miles in addition. The question was raised by some local residents as to whether the route by the Hoteo Valley would really be the best for the construction of this railway, and with the view of setting this point at rest a careful examination was made of the Dome Valley and the western (or Green's Creek) routes, but both were found to be inferior to the original surveyed route by the Hoteo Valley, and the line has accordingly been located across the Kaipara Flats to that valley and on by that route towards Wellsford.

"The Railways Authorisation Act, 1901," sanctioned the construction of this railway as far as Wellsford. It is proposed to provide for the further extension to Maungaturoto in the current year's Authorisation Bill.

Owing to bad weather interfering with the progress of the survey, field-work had to be discontinued recently, but will shortly be resumed. The expenditure on this line during the year considerably exceeded the vote obtained for it last session, having amounted to £18,218, or allowing for the permanent-way materials issued to the line to £25,049. For the current year a vote of £20,000 is proposed.

PAEROA-WAIHI.

Work on this line has been continued throughout the year, principally on the Karangahake Tunnel. Some very heavy ground has been met with, and progress has consequently been slow.

The rails are laid from the junction with the Thames line at Paeroa to Karangahake. A ballast-pit has been opened out, and a quantity of rock quarried ready for crushing in the stone-breaker which has been procured for the purpose. Beyond the tunnel the formation is about half done for another mile and a quarter. The contractors for the Ohinemuri Bridge, Messrs. J. and A. Anderson, have cast the cylinders in their foundry in Christchurch, and have started work in connection with the abutments and piers at the site of the bridge. As soon as this bridge is completed so as to connect the Karangahake Station yard with the main road on the opposite side of the river it will be possible to open this section of the line for traffic. The expenditure last year was £18,324, or £24,993 allowing for the value of the permanent-way materials used. For the current year a vote of £25,000 is asked for.

GISBORNE-KARAKA.

A considerable amount of work was done on this line during the year, and the section from Gisborne Wharf to Ormond, 10½ miles in length, was handed over to the Railway Department and opened for traffic on the 26th June last. For two miles and a quarter beyond Ormond the formation is complete and the rails laid, and for nearly another half-mile the formation is about half done. This brings the line to the site of the Waipaoa Bridge, tenders for which are now being invited. This bridge will be 560 ft. in length, and its erection will probably occupy nearly a year and a half. Beyond the bridge-site survey-work has been undertaken, and the pegs are now in as far as Karaka, and